

DIVINE MISSION CONTINUES,

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The Divine mission continues endlessly, ceaselessly, like the holy River Ganges. The Divine Mission is so vibrant that it will draw the attention of millions of people who get inspired in turn to participate in the Divine Mission with all their energy, with all their creativity.

Divine Mission includes certain important facets which has been emphasised and stressed upon by Bhagavan Himself repeatedly. The Divine Mission is unique and very special in more than one sense. The Divine Mission gives us a new perspective, a new dimension to our life altogether. And the meaning of religion, the meaning of religious life, have been interpreted in a different way by Bhagavan Baba Himself.

Today we look at religion as a ritual. Religion is confined to a day, or to a particular period of time or season. But Bhagavan Baba revolutionised this concept. He spiritualised human lifestyle. Life is a religion; religion is not separate from life. When life is led religiously, well, that becomes spiritual altogether.

Bhagavan lays emphasis on spirituality more than on religion. The religion, full of rituals, divides people, like scissors that cut a cloth into pieces; whereas spirituality is like a needle that stitches all the pieces into a beautiful garment. Therefore, the Divine Mission continues until we lead totally a spiritual life, until we make our life a religion, until we make our life religious in every angle, from all perspectives.

BEND THE BODY

Bhagavan speaks of the importance of all the three ways of spirituality. The first way is “bend the body”. Bend the body means work for the community, serve the community. The body is gifted to serve the community. The body’s not given to you to enjoy the pleasures of the world. *“Paropakaram Artham Idam Shareeram.”* The body’s given to serve the community.

The eyes are given to see the Divinity by and large, all over the universe. The ears are gifted to listen to the melody of spiritual music. The tongue is given to chant His Glory, to sing His Glory. And the feet are given to circumambulate round the temple. All these parts are given for sacred purposes. And when once we lead a life of sanctity, the life is liberated, but not otherwise. We should lead our life in full recognition and full awareness of the body that has been gifted to us by Bhagavan Himself.

The intelligence is given to man not merely to amass wealth, not to occupy exalted position, not to be merely influential in the community, not to run after the power. The intelligence is given so as to inquire within yourself, to experience the Divinity within. Therefore, the body has got a meaning.

It is Bhagavan Baba who explained to us the purpose of this body, the purpose of life – the purpose of life being to recognize the Divinity within, to experience the Divinity within. That is the purpose of life. Therefore, it begins with this: ‘Bend the body’, do the service. Unless you recognise it, well, you cannot begin, or you cannot take the first step, the first rung in the ladder of spirituality. That’s the reason why our spiritual organisation is given the name **seva** organisation, as seva means service. Bend the body!

Here we should be mindful of one fact. It’s not merely about giving commands. It’s not enough if we just organise. You should do it for yourself. The leader should be the number one to lead, the first one to participate. I can give you any number of examples. During Narayana seva it is Bhagavan who starts serving the people there. He personally distributes clothes on every occasion. He does, and wants us to do. Therefore, let not any position get into our head so as to boss over people, so as to delegate duties to people. No! A leader should lead. He should do service first.

We know here in Prasanthi Nilayam how elderly people, a bank director at the national level, is just serving water in the canteen; the director of the university of technology from Kanpur, is supervising the civil constructions here in Prasanthi Nilayam. I also know there in Brindavan, the entire ashram service activities are participated in by people of all cadres. Unless they are introduced, you will not come to know what they are in their professional lives.

So, bend the body means, irrespective of anything, we should participate in service activities, because in togetherness we encourage each other, in togetherness we can turn out service in a wider dimension, to a wider area, to a larger extent. “Bend the body.”

MEND THE SENSES

The second thing that Swami tells us is, “Mend the senses.” We should mend our senses so that it would be a contributing factor to developing love for God. The love for God is what we call devotion. The devotion is possible if we mend our senses. If the senses are diverted, if the senses are out of control, it is impossible to have devotion and to have love for God. Impossible!

Mend the senses. What does Baba mean? **Think no evil, think what is good. Hear no evil, hear what is good. See no evil, see what is good. Think no evil, think what is**

good. That's what Bhagavan means by "Mend the senses". Therefore, mend the senses is given to us as a dictum by Bhagavan Baba to follow, so as to be more devoted to Him, to develop the spirit of love for Swami.

And the devotion does not mean merely love for God. Love for God means what? When you love everybody, well, that is true love. That is contained here when Swami says, "**Love all and serve all.**" You cannot serve all without loving all. Unless you love all, you cannot serve all.

Now we can understand how "Bend the body" is connected to "Mend the senses". Senses are superior to the body, and when once you mend your senses, then what will happen? You will be a good devotee, a true devotee. You'll love everybody unconditionally, and it is love for all times, selfless love. That's what Bhagavan said: Love, love without any selfishness, without any trace of self-interest.

When Swami asked a great scholar to define love, the scholar was fumbling. He was hesitating to sum up love in one sentence. Baba immediately came forward and said: **Selfishness is lovelessness; lovelessness is selfishness, and that without selfishness is love.** That's what it is.

So it is the selfishness. Lovelessness is selfishness. Let us understand that. So the selfishness brings all the difference between the love and the rest of the things around. Therefore, **lovelessness is selfishness, while selflessness is love.** That's what Bhagavan says, and that is what we should keep in our mind: Mend your senses.

All the senses should contribute, should be directed towards love. The scriptures clearly say that without mending the senses, it is absolutely impossible to proceed along the spiritual path. A car without a brake, or an engine without a brake, are useless. They will head you to an injury or an accident. So all these senses should be sharp, should be under your control totally. That is what is meant by devotion or *bhakthi*.

KARMA YOGA

So the first way, bend the body, is *karma yoga*. *Karma yoga* is different from *karma anushtana*. *Karma anushtana* is observance of a ritual regularly, scrupulously, in a systematic way. But *karma anushtana* is undertaken with a goal, with a purpose of self-interest. At the most, it may give you a higher state of life. It may fulfill your desire. But the *karma anushtana* or the observance of *karma* or the ritualistic activity should be taken to a higher level of *karma yoga* that would connect you to God Himself.

Karma yoga is selfless activity. *Karma yoga* is an activity without the element of doership. Doership – *karthruthwa bhava*, or enjoyership, *bhokthruthwa bhava*. You are neither the doer nor the experiencer. No. The feeling that I am only an instrument in the

hands of God is true *karma yoga*. I have no selfish interest in this. I have no ulterior motive in this. Then *karma anushtana* gets exalted into the next stage of *karma yoga*.

So bend the body means *karma yoga*, that which connects you to the Divinity by undertaking selfless activity, by considering yourself as an instrument in the hands of God.

BHAKTHI YOGA

Then comes the next stage, mend your senses, the path of devotion, *bhakthi yoga*. Devotion means what? It means your love for everybody. **“Expansion of love is life. Contraction of love is death.”** That’s what Baba said. Bhakthi is eternal love, a continuous flow of love, unconditional love, beyond cadre, class, gender, beyond all these considerations. That love is divine. That love one has to cultivate provided he has got control over his senses. That’s what Swami means when He says, **“Mend your senses.”**

Many people are senseless. When they are sensible, they will control their senses. They’ll have a check on their senses. The senses are given not merely to please the people or bosses around. The senses are given to be sensible enough to understand and experience this love which is divine, immortal, nectarine. Why? Because **Love is God, God is Love.**

And this love of Swami we should observe in close quarters and try to emulate His example. Swami serves poor people, Swami serves children, Swami takes care of elderly people with the same love, with the same spirit of love, as He showers His love on the President of India. In the sight of Swami, the President of India and an office peon are one and the same.

Love has no limits, it has no boundaries. It has no cadre whatsoever. Love is uniform. That’s what we have to learn from Swami. We have seen Swami helping a very elderly man to climb up the steps leading to the dais. We also see Swami holding the hands of an elderly man, giving him all the support, as He was standing in front of the mike to address the gathering. He’s Kamavadhani himself [*a Sanskrit scholar who settled here*]. When Swami is serving like that, why don’t we serve? Why not? Beyond all cadres, with a spirit of equality, that’s absolutely necessary. Mend your senses, *bhakthi yoga*. This is the only way to connect ourselves to God.

END THE MIND

And the third step is what we call ‘end your mind’. End the mind. What do you mean by ‘end the mind’? The mind is full of desires, full of feelings and sentiments, emotions. The mind has got certain ambitions, specific targets: “Let me occupy that position.” “Let

me dominate that man.” Mind is FULL of ego. That’s why most of the people are egocentric. This is because the mind is so sharp, so powerful, so cunning, and highly political and extrovert.

This mind should turn inward so that it will get into the field of self-enquiry. Baba has given the example of the lock and key: if you turn towards one side, it opens. If you turn towards other side, it locks. When it locks, understand it is bondage. When it is unlocked, understand it is liberation. The same key. The key is your mind, while that lock is your body. This is what is meant by ‘end the mind’. End the mind means turn the mind inward so that this ego will find no place there.

An egoistic man is always outward, *pravrittri*; whereas a spiritual man is always having his mind turned inward, *nivritti*. Therefore, ‘end the mind’ means *nivritti marga*, an inward path of inquiry, or self-inquiry. This is the spirit of spirituality. This we have to understand.

And then, ‘end the mind’ means we should know what our mind is. Mind is full of thoughts, full of desires, so it is absolutely necessary to empty the mind. Mind should be empty, meaning thoughtlessness, *amanaska*, or withdrawal of the mind, *manolaya*. Mind should be merged in singing the glory of Bhagavan. Sing the glory – the thoughts are gone! Only one thought – that’s Swami. That’s what we call *mano-laya*. In deep meditation, the mind and thoughts are completely gone. That is what you call *mano-nashana*, the withdrawal of the mind. ‘End the mind’ means all these things.

We are used to quote Swami repeatedly, full throated, to the pitch of our voice, without understanding the spiritual implications behind the words. Every sentence has got so much depth in it, so much profundity in it. And we have to substantiate it, we have to explain, share these statements, with all the background of the scriptural knowledge, with all the information collected from spiritual information, on the basis of Sai literature.

The Sai literature has to be studied in depth and shared with everybody. Therefore, first bend the body, the *karma yoga*; next, mend the senses, *bhakthi yoga*; the third, end the mind, *jnana yoga*, the *yoga* of knowledge.

The yoga of action should take you to the yoga of devotion or love. And that culminates in the yoga of knowledge. That is what is called *Triveni Sangama*, the union of all the three rivers - Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati. Every path should end in the path of knowledge, *jnana yoga*, because *Jnanadeva tu kaivalyam*, ‘It is only this knowledge that gives you liberation.’

Be it service or devotion, they will take you to that stage of knowledge. This knowledge does not mean bookish knowledge or academic knowledge or verbal knowledge or making speeches, no! By knowledge I mean awareness. Knowledge is *vijnana*,

experiential knowledge, experimental knowledge, existential knowledge, which we are supposed to have.

SAI LITERATURE

Therefore, as we are nearing Bhagavan Baba's Birthday, I appeal to everybody to study Sai literature in depth. Sai literature is going to be the only one that ensures a guaranteed future. The mere service activities are only seasonal, that's all. They will have effect for the time being, whereas Sai literature is for the Being, and not for the time being. Let us understand.

The Sai literature, *Sai Sahithya*, is the foundation on which this mansion of service activity is built. This beautiful building of architectural beauty is built on the foundation of Sai message only. Therefore we should train everybody, the youth in particular, to get familiar with Sai literature, Sai Saraswata, *Sai Sahithya*, because there is no topic that Baba has not covered. He covered all aspects of life, all facets of public life, for people of all generations, and that which is applicable to everyone, to everyone all over the world. Sai's literature is rather for the cosmos, let us understand. It is global, and it is not local. Let us be convinced of that.

Take charge of this. Let us classify Sai's literature. What did Baba Swami say about community? What did Baba say about the family? What does Baba say about our financial relationship? About political commitments? About our social obligations? Let us classify Sai literature under different heads, study them in depth, and share this knowledge with everybody if we are really interested in the mission of Sai. The mission of Sai is not temporary. The mission of Sai is not limited to a particular phase of life. Sai Mission continues on and on.

MESSAGE AND MISSION ARE THE TWO EYES OF THE AVATAR

And then, let us also be mindful of training a band of people, fully aware of Sai message and Sai mission. Message and mission are the two eyes of the Avatar Bhagavan Baba. Therefore, one cannot be there without the other. The two should work in unison. They should work in perfect harmony to have perfect vision.

So Sai Mission with a vision means both the message and the mission, the work, should go together. That's what I mean. These things I'm sharing with you, after 45 years or even more – I'm closer to 50 years of life with Swami, and 45 years of life in the Sai Organisation.

With these guidelines I take leave of you, with prayers to Bhagavan that Bhagavan should bless us all with the right spirit of awareness, with the right spirit of commitment,

and see that we'll be egoless, that we'll continue to be simple and humble, and be an example to the rest of the community.

May Bhagavan bless us all.

Thank you.

Sai Ram.